

# European Communities

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## Working Documents

1978 - 1979

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12 February 1979

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### ORAL QUESTIONS

Pursuant to Rule 47a of the Rules of Procedure

for QUESTION TIME on 13, 14 and 15 February 1979

PE 56.913

In accordance with the directives on the conduct of Question Time. questions may be answered only if the questioner is present or has notified the President in writing, before Question Time begins. of the name of his substitute.

Questions to the Commission which have not been answered on Tuesday for lack of time are called on Thursday. If the questioners are unable to attend, they may of course, notify the President in writing of the name of their substitute before the questions are called on Thursday.

1. Question by Mrs DUNWOODY (H-413/78)

Subject : Pensions of European Community officials

What percentage of reduction, following the changes consequential on the application of the European Unit of Account to the pensions of European Community officials, will be suffered by those officials in Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom who have retired on pension from the European Community?

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2. Question by Mr NORMANTON (H-316/78)

Subject : Poor Telephone Communication with the European Commission

Will the Commission, as a matter of great urgency, either increase the number of switchboard operators or install an automatic transfer system so that callers can get through directly to an internal number without going through the switchboard?

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3. Question by Mr ALBERS (H-440/78)

Subject : Coordination of the various funds

What progress has been made towards coordinating the various Funds?

4. Question by Mr EDWARDS (H-447/78)

Subject : Commission on pharmaceutical drugs

Following the report of the Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC) showing drastic differences in the price of identical medicines in different member countries, will the Commission support the establishment of a commission on drugs, as recommended in the report?

5. Question by Mr YEATS (H-446/78)

Subject : Time limit for answering written questions to the  
Commission

In the course of his reply to my Oral Question without debate (Doc. 529/78) on 15 January, 1979<sup>1</sup>, Mr Richard Burke, on behalf of the Commission, referred to Article 45 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure and said : 'We have not at any stage as a Commission formally engaged to be able on all occasions to meet the requirements of that particular rule'.

In view of the fact that, ever since the setting up of this Parliament 20 years ago, the period of one month for the answering of written questions has been an accepted part of our Rules of Procedure, without any objection from the Commission, will the Commission now accept that there is indeed an obligation upon them to provide such replies in all normal cases within one month?

6. Question by Mr SCOTT-HOPKINS (H-394/78)

Subject : Land Ownership

Does the Commission believe that the varying restrictions on private land ownership in the various Member States are in any way a hindrance to either the development of the Common Agricultural Policy, or to the rights of establishment and to free exercise of professions specified in the Treaties?

7. Question by Mr BROSAN (H-427/78)

Subject : OPEC oil price increase

It is estimated that the price of crude oil is likely to rise by 14.5% by October 1979. What effect is this likely to have on the economic prospects for the European Community?

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<sup>1</sup> Debates of the European Parliament (provisional edition)

8. Question by Mr BRUGHA (H-429/78)

Subject : Camp David Summit

Further to my oral question to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs during Question Time in the October part session<sup>1</sup> on the possible contribution that the Community could make to furthering the hopes for peace following the Camp David Summit, does the Commission seriously consider that, to date, the Community's efforts have been sufficient and what can it do in the immediate future to promote peace in this area?

9. Question by Mr SPICER (H-401/78)

Subject : EC Information Office in Malta

What consideration has the Commission given to the opening of a European Community Information Office in Malta?

10. Question by Mr NOLAN (H-430/78)

Subject : Tenders for projects financed by the European Development Fund

Is the Commission satisfied that the notices of invitation to tender are circulated freely enough in each of the Member States?

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 351/78, No. 43 (H-269/78)

11. Question by Mr ANSQUER (H-436/78)

Subject : Protectionist measures taken by the United States in the steel sector

On 17 November 1978 the American Government published an emergency regulation laying down that imported construction steels were the only products which 'had a significant bearing on the cost of the national motorway construction programmes' and that in consequence a 10% levy would be raised to protect steels used in federal funded motorway construction programmes.

In these circumstances, what attitude does the Commission intend to adopt towards the USA during the talks in the OECD's Steel Committee?

12. Question by Mr PRESCOTT (H-438/78)

Subject : Commission Internal Audit

Is the Commission satisfied with all its internal audit systems and are changes envisaged?

13. Question by Mr SPINELLI (H-441/78)

Subject : Seizure of political material at the German frontier

Does the Commission not consider that the seizure on 19 October 1978 of a number of books, including Antonio Rubbi's 'I partiti comunisti dell'Europa occidentale' (West European Communist Parties), by West German customs officials at the Basle frontier post between the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland - a seizure prejudicial to the interests of the Italian publisher Nicola Teti - not only infringes German national law, which does not provide for any censorship of political literature, but is also clearly at variance with the fundamental principles of the Treaty of Rome and the existence of the Customs Union between the Member States; what measures does it intend to take to prevent any similar abuses occurring in any Member State in future, and, finally, what steps does it intend to take to obtain redress at the earliest opportunity in respect of the damages suffered by Mr Teti as a result of the action taken by the German police?

14. Question by Sir Geoffrey de FREITAS (H-442/78)

Subject : Inland waterways

What plans has the Commission for encouraging the increased use of inland waterways for the transport of heavy goods within the Community?

15. Question by Lord BRUCE OF DONINGTON (H-443/78)

Subject : Contributions to Community Budget

The Commission has made available figures showing the net contributions of Member States to the Community Budget in 1976 and 1977. It is understood that in the context of the EPC Report estimates were made of what Member States' net contributions would have been in these two years under the full own resources system. Will the Commission now publish these figures?

16. Question by Mr CORRIE (H-444/78)

Subject : Italian Legislation on wine based alcohol

Is the Commission aware of the provisions of Italian Decree Law No. 46 of 18 March 1976 and Italian Ministerial Decree of 24 August 1977 which provide for exemption of fiscal duty for wine based alcohol originating in other Member States? Irrespective since this exemption does not apply to either cereal or cane-based alcohol would the Commission not agree that this Italian legislation contravenes the EEC Treaty?

17. Question by Mr BROWN (H-448/78)

Subject : Polyurethane foam

What studies were undertaken by the Commission to satisfy itself that it is safe to use polyurethane foam for furnishings in the Parliament buildings in Strasbourg and Luxembourg, What volume of polyurethane foam is contained in those buildings and is it satisfied with the safety precautions?

18. Question by Mrs SQUARCIALUPI (H-450/78)

Subject: COFACE representatives

Can the Commission state the criteria for selecting representatives of COFACE (European Communities' Committee of Family Organizations) and indicate whether they are periodically replaced to take due account of the realities of European family life?

19. Question by Lady FISHER of REDNAL (H-451/78)

Subject : Research into accidents at work

What efforts have been made by the Commission to promote European cooperation relating to research into accidents at work?



20. Question by Mr LAGORCE (H-452/78)

Subject: Creation of a European Peace Research Centre

In 1966 the Swedish Parliament set up a peace research centre (SIPRI), which has become world-famous.

Since the main aim of the founders of Europe was, after all, to bring peace to this continent, does not the Commission feel that launching a study on the possible creation of a European Peace Research Centre would be a happy initiative, calculated to enhance its image with world public opinion?

21. Question by Mr McDONALD (H-453/78)

Subject : Young Farmer's exchange scheme

Given the widespread success for many years of educational exchange schemes in agricultural, will the Commission say why the young farmer's exchange scheme has been allowed to lapse? Does the Commission not agree that this is particularly regrettable in view of the recognized cultural as well as technical benefit of this scheme, and that this should have taken place at a time when European cooperation is becoming of increasing importance particularly among young people, and will the Commission take steps to rectify this situation as soon as possible?

22. Question by Mr KAVANAGH (H-458/78)

Subject : International Year of the Child and legislation relating to children in the Member States

Will the Commission immediately undertake a comparative study of the legislation relating to children in the Member States, in order to ascertain the differences in treatment and opportunities for children in the Community, as part of its contribution to the International Year of the Child?

23. Question by Mr OSBORN (H-460/78)

Subject : Commercial vehicles

In drawing up its latest proposals on the weight of commercial vehicles, what consultations did the Commission have with organizations representing the manufacturers of commercial vehicles in the Community and with those concerned with the protection of the environment?

24. Question by Lord KENNET (H-463/78)

Subject : 'Buy-back deals' with Eastern Europe

Why has the Commission not sent to the Parliament and its appropriate committees copies of its survey of 'buy-back deals' in trade with Eastern Europe; and what is its opinion of the recent study on the same subject by the British General and Municipal Workers' Union?

25. Question by Lord BETHELL (H-467/78)

Subject : Price rises of certain foodstuffs in the United Kingdom

Is the Commission aware that since June 1978 the United Kingdom price of butter has risen by 31 percent, of sugar by 37 percent, and of eggs by 41 percent and are they aware of the effect of these price rises on public opinion vis-à-vis the European Community, and will it bear this in mind during the Agricultural Price Review?

26. Question by Mr NYBORG (H-468/78)

Subject: EEC information officers for the direct elections to the European Parliament

Has the Commission trained in Denmark 40 EEC information officers to run information campaigns about the EEC in connection with the direct elections to the European Parliament, and if so, will it state what criteria were laid down for recruiting the information officers, and whether they are paid by the Commission?

27. Question by Mr STETTER (H-470/78)

Subject: Approval procedure for certain types of doors in France

The French law of 17 March 1978 introduced an approval procedure for certain types of doors according to which, before they can be marketed, these doors must receive the approval of a committee whose chairman is a French door manufacturer, and which is told in advance whether a particular door is French or foreign.

Does the Commission feel that this procedure is in conformity with Articles 30 and 36 of the EEC Treaty, and if not, what steps does it intend to take to stop it?

28. Question by Mrs EWING (H-473/78) \*

Subject : Grants from the European Regional Development Fund

Is the Commission aware that the current procedure for obtaining grants from the European Regional Development Fund allows the Treasuries of Member-Governments to intercept grants made for projects submitted by individual firms, even where the latter have been informed by the Commission that their proposals have been approved, as in the case of James Hill (Montrose) Ltd. in Scotland, and what steps it will take to remedy this situation which is causing widespread disillusionment with the Regional Development Fund?

29. Question by Mr HERBERT (H-476/78)

Subject : Freezing of diesel oil

Are there any EEC regulations or directives relating to special additives to diesel oil so as to prevent it from freezing in sub-zero weather conditions?

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\* Will not be called if Item 378 is kept on the agenda

30. Question by Mr POWER (H-477/78)

Subject : Microwave radiation

Due to public concern on the safety of microwave ovens, can the Commission state what studies, if any, it has carried out in this field and what its attitude is to the safety of such products?

31. Question by Mr DE CLERCQ (H-479/78)

Subject: Utilization of the resources made available under the second EEC-Greece Financial Protocol

Will the Commission propose, with a view to ending the delay in the application of the second EEC-Greece Financial Protocol, an ad hoc procedure for the immediate release for the benefit of the Greek economy of the financial resources made available under that Protocol?

32. Question by Mr GLINNE (H-480/78)

Subject: Eurofer

The resignation of two directors of EUROFER raises the question of the internal disorganization within that body. Can the Commission explain the situation and does it not think that, in the light of such disorganization, measures should be taken directly by the Community institutions rather than through a body of which the least that can be said is that it encourages cartelization in the iron and steel industry?

33. Question by Mr HOWELL (H-398/78)

Subject : Common Agricultural Policy compared with the USSR's  
Agricultural Policy

Does the Council agree that the recent change of policy in the USSR in favour of private farming, as reported in the 'Times' of 2 October 1978, both reflects the failure of centrally-planned agriculture and high-lights the fact that the CAP, notwithstanding its admitted problems, has proved highly successful in feeding the peoples of Europe?

34. Question by Sir Geoffrey de FREITAS (H-434/78)

Subject : Opening of Government contracts to companies from all  
Community countries

What action has been taken by the Governments of the Community to meet the timetable for the opening of government contracts suggested by the Commission at Question Time on Tuesday 16 January 1979?

35. Question by Mr ANSQUER (H-437/78)

Subject : Quotas for Community special steels exported to the USA

Since 14 June 1976 Community exports of special steels to the USA have been subject to a strict quota. Does the Council not feel that it should act to put a prompt end to a situation which goes against the rules of GATT at a time when the Community's special steels industry is going through a crisis comparable to that affecting ordinary steels?

36. Question by Mr HOFFMANN (H-439/78)

Subject : Strengthening the Economies of less prosperous countries

Will the Council make available to the European Parliament the report by the Economic Policy Committee on measures to strengthen the economies of the less prosperous countries in the context of the EMS?

37. Question by Mr BROWN (H-449/78)

Subject : Polyurethane foam

Having regard to the dangerous nature of foamed polyurethane, will the Council obtain a copy of 'The Report of the Technical Sub-Committee on the Fire Risks of New Materials', published by the Home Office Fire Department of the United Kingdom and institute a working party to consider the relevance of its findings to the general safety of persons employed in factories where such material is manufactured, and the safety of persons in dwellings where polyurethane is used in furnishings?

38. Question by Mr FELLERMAIER (H-454/78/rev.)

Subject: Discussions between the French and Luxembourg Governments on the seat of the European Parliament

In the 'Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace' of 17 January 1979 reference is made to discussions between the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Mr Thorn, and the French Foreign Minister, Mr François Poncet, on the choice of seat for the European Parliament. Commenting on this report, the President-in-Office of the Council told the European Parliament that the question of Parliament's seat had been decided by the governments and referred to the procedures provided for in the Treaties and relevant decisions.

I would therefore ask the Council :

Are discussions going on between the French and Luxembourg Governments on the seat of the European Parliament as reported in the abovementioned newspaper article?

39. Question by Mr DANKERT (H-455/78/rev.)

Subject: Discussions between the French and Luxembourg  
Governments on the seat of the European Parliament

Were the Council and the Governments of the Member States informed  
of the discussions referred to in a report in the 'Dernières Nouvelles  
d'Alsace' of 17 January 1979?

40. Question by Mr SEEFELD (H-456/78/rev.)

Subject: Discussions between the French and Luxembourg  
Governments on the seat of the European Parliament

How will the Council ensure that the European Parliament is  
involved in the procedures laid down for fixing the seat of  
the European Parliament?

41. Question by Lord BRUCE of DONINGTON (H-457/78)

Subject : Commission Proposals

Is the Council aware that, according to Commission paper  
SEC(79)24 final of 12 January 1979, there were, as at  
1 January 1979 two hundred and seventy eight Commission  
proposals covering a wide range of EEC matters upon which  
Parliament had delivered its opinion which were still pending  
before the Council awaiting decision and that these relate  
back as far as 1968 as per the following table :

<u>Year in which opinion was delivered by the European Parliament</u>	<u>Number of Commission Proposals still pending</u>
1968	5
1969	3
1970	11
1971	3
1972	12
1973	10
1974	25
1975	23
1976	30
1977	53
1978	<u>103</u>
	<u>278</u>

What steps does the Council propose to take to reduce the backlog?

42. Question by Mr RADOUX (H-459/78)

Subject : Negotiations with Yugoslavia

When will the Council confirm the Commission's new mandate for the negotiations with Yugoslavia?

43. Question by Mr OSBORN (H-461/78)

Subject : European Space programme

What consideration has the Council of Ministers given to a European Space programme, and to industrial and applied implications for the Community as a whole, and how does it visualise the relationship with Member Governments and the European Space Agency?

44. Question by Mr PRESCOTT (H-471/78)

Subject : Fisheries in the renegotiation of the Lomé agreement

What consideration is the Council giving to specific proposals for fisheries cooperation in the context of the renegotiation of the Lomé agreement?

45. Question by Mr EDWARDS (H-472/78)

Subject : Improper influence by Multinational Corporations

To ask the Council if their attention has been drawn to the booklet entitled 'The Infiltration of the UN System by Multinational Corporations' by the 'Declaration of Berne' revealing the attempts by certain multinational corporations to exercise improper influence over decision-making in the Communities and what action they propose to take?



46. Question by Mrs EWING (H-474/78)

Subject : Grants from the European Regional Development Fund

Is the Council aware that current practices in making grants from the European Regional Development Fund are causing more disappointment than trust in the European Institutions, because individual firms are advised that their cases have been submitted to Brussels, while in reality they will not receive any additional payment because the application, even if granted, results only in refunding to the national treasury regional aid paid long ago to the firms, and does the Council plan any amendments to this procedure in the new Regional Fund regulation?

47. Question by Mr NOLAN (H-475/78)

Subject : Butter subsidy for pensioners

As pensioners who have paid contributions towards their pensions during their working life do not benefit from the EEC butter subsidies for Social Welfare recipients, would the Council be favourably disposed to extending the scheme to such pensioners?

48. Question by Mr SOURY (H-478/78)

Subject: Immediate and complete abolition of compensatory amounts

Can the Council confirm that the representative of France has transmitted to it the French National Assembly's imperative request for the immediate and complete abolition of monetary compensatory amounts, which is vital to preserve French agriculture from ruin, and can it explain how it reacted to this request?



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QUESTIONS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE NINE MEMBER STATES OF THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY MEETING IN POLITICAL COOPERATION

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49. Question by Mr HAMILTON (H-399/78) \*

Subject : Code of conduct for EEC based companies in South  
Africa

What conclusions were reached by the Foreign Ministers following their first annual review of the progress made by firms based in the EEC which operate or have subsidiaries in South Africa in applying the code of conduct adopted by the Foreign Ministers in September 1977; and will the Foreign Ministers publish these conclusions, along with a summary of the reports made by companies?

50. Question by Mrs Walz (H-433/78)

Subject : Violations of human rights in the Soviet Union

What action have the Foreign Ministers taken to put an end to the violations of the Helsinki Agreement by the Soviet Union referred to in an oral question to the Council of the European Communities (Doc. 32/76) and debated by the European Parliament on 12 May 1976<sup>1</sup> and with what success?

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\* Will not be called if Item 390 is kept on the agenda

<sup>1</sup> Debates, No. 203, p. 135 ff

51. Question by Mr EBERHARD (H-435/78)

Subject: Introduction of a public holiday on 8 May in the Member States

What action do the Ministers intend to take with a view to the designation of 8 May as a public holiday in all the Community countries to commemorate the victory over nazism and fascism in Europe?

52. Question by Mr KAVANAGH (H-462/78)<sup>\*</sup>

Subject : Apartheid and the European Community

Is the Council satisfied that all Member States are pursuing policies in relation to South Africa, consistent with the Community's policy on apartheid ?

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<sup>\*</sup> Will not be called if Item 390 is kept on the agenda